



MUS FUSCIPES, Waterh.

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Dusky-footed Rat.

Mus fuscipes, Waterh. in Darwin's Zool. of the Voy. of H.M.S. Beagle, Mammalia, p. 66. pl. 25.—Cat. of Mamm. in Brit. Mus., p. 111.

—— *lutreola*, Gray, App. to Grey's Journ. of Two Exp. of Disc. in Australia, vol. ii. p. 409.

THIS species of Rat is distributed in abundance over the whole of the southern portion of Australia; but I have no evidence that its range extends to the north coast. Specimens from Swan River in Western Australia, the swamps and thick brushes of New South Wales, the intermediate colony of South Australia, and the islands in Bass's Straits, differ in no respect from each other. Its favourite haunts are low and humid situations where long grass and herbage abound, and the banks of freshwater brooks and lagoons.

Although belonging to a different genus, it presents in its aquatic habits and in many of its actions a striking resemblance to the common Water Vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) of Europe; like that animal, it swims with the greatest ease, and may be constantly seen crossing and recrossing the small brooks and water-holes so abundant in the localities it frequents. It is rather less than the *Mus Rattus* in size, but is of a stouter form, and is moreover remarkable for the great length and softness of its fur, and the brown colour of its feet.

The general tint of the upper surface and the sides of the head and body is blackish brown, with an admixture of grey; of the under surface greyish white; the feet are brown, the hairs being greyish at the tip; the tail is black, and but sparingly clothed with short bristly hairs; the ears are rather sparingly clothed with hairs, which are for the most part of a brownish grey colour; the ordinary fur of the back is about three-quarters of an inch in length and very soft, of a deep grey colour broadly annulated with brownish yellow near, and blackish at, the tip; the longer black hairs measure upwards of an inch and a quarter in length; the incisor teeth are orange-coloured.

The figures in the accompanying Plate represent the animal correctly both in size and colour.